



Information blocking compliance – Are you ready for April 5?

April 2, 2021

There are just a few days remaining before the Office of the National Coordinator's (ONC) information blocking final rule goes into effect. On April 5, 2021, covered actors, which include health care providers, certified health information technology developers, and health information networks and exchanges, will be prohibited from taking any action that is likely to interfere with the access, exchange or use of electronic health information (EHI), unless the actor's action falls within one of the [eight enumerated exceptions](#).

Covered actors, including health care providers, should conduct a thorough analysis of their internal procedures and make necessary operational changes to ensure they are ready to comply with the information blocking requirements. To aid in that compliance, ONC has created [Information Blocking FAQs](#) to assist health care providers in understanding the parameters of the regulations.

Currently, penalties for noncompliance with the information blocking provisions are unknown. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Health and Human Services released a proposed rule outlining civil monetary penalties for health information technology companies and health information networks but has not yet proposed any penalties for health care providers. OIG has stated that it plans to establish appropriate disincentives for providers in future rulemaking. However, the agency has not yet released a final rule on the applicable penalties.

The information blocking rules are one part of ONC's current focus on prioritizing interoperability. At ONC's 2021 Annual Meeting this week, Micky Tripahti, the National Coordinator for Health IT, stated that the information blocking final rule "pushes us forward in thinking how interoperability will be a routine thing that is widely available and easy for people to use."

Authors
